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SUBJECT: UN GENERAL DEBATE: RUSSIA, NORTH KOREA, AND OTHERS
SPEAK

¶1. SUMMARY: Speakers at the UN General Debate the afternoon of September 27 continued discussing the food, energy and financial crises; United Nations democratization; terrorism; and regional conflict resolution. Russia defended its actions in Georgia with a criticism of the anti-terrorism coalition. North Korea called the United States "the worst human rights violator" and accused it of violating the Six-Party October 2007 agreement and September 2005 joint statement. Malaysia criticized the United States for conducting "Guantanamo detention without trial." On rights of reply, Iran and the United Arab Emirates debated sovereignty of the Abu Musa islands, and North Korea and Japan debated redress of crimes committed during WWII. The following countries spoke: Russia, Tunisia, Hungary, Zambia, Lesotho, Indonesia, Monaco, Uzbekistan, Greece, Uruguay, Czech Republic, Malaysia, and North Korea. Video and texts are available at www.un.org/ga/63/generaldebate. END SUMMARY.

RUSSIA: CRITICAL OF THE ANTI-TERROR COALITION

¶2. At the beginning of its speech, Russia called the war in Iraq a violation of international law under the "false pretext" of the fight on terror. Continuing, the speaker asked if the casualties in Afghanistan were an "acceptable price" to pay in countering terrorism. Russia argued that the coalition's operating method has created a "unipolar," rather than cooperative, international security framework, leading to the aggression in South Ossetia that Russia helped repel. In addition to defending its recent actions in Georgia, Russia commented that the international community should not "artificially undermine" its relationships with partner countries that have "a common history and geography." However, the Czech Republic criticized Russia for its actions against Georgia and called on the international community to assist in alleviating the suffering of those displaced.

NORTH KOREA: DERIDES U.S. FOR HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

¶3. North Korea called the United States "the worst human rights violator, evidenced by its armed invasion of sovereign countries and unhesitatingly massacring of innocent civilians." The speaker deemed the U.S.-South Korean August 2008 joint military exercise "war drills mounting a preemptive nuclear strike on the DPRK." He also accused the United States of hindering implementation of the Six-Party October 2007 agreement and September 2005 joint statement, prompting North Korea to take "relevant countermeasures." Regarding Japan, he opposed its request for a Security Council seat due to its "history of aggression and massacre" against Korea during World War II (which Japan addressed in a right of reply).

GENERAL THEMES

14. Speakers continued to address progress toward the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) in light of the food, energy and financial crises, calling for developed countries to fulfill their commitments. In contrast to most speakers, Hungary insisted that the current crises should not be an excuse for giving up on the MDG's. Many speakers specifically addressed the need for increased action to reduce greenhouse gases to ameliorate the damaging effects of climate change. On the democratization of the United Nations, most countries included references to the reform or expansion of the Security Council. Concerning security issues, other speakers reiterated their support for the fight against terrorism as well as called on the international community to bolster efforts to rebuild Afghanistan and to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Khalilzad